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SUBJECT: Berlin Contingency Planning

Embassy is concerned regarding persistent references to proposals to reserve certain altitudes for Western flights with other altitudes reserved for Soviet use. Such "layering" would not only give Soviets "exclusive use" between given altitudes but would give them control over access to and from Western "layers" above exclusive Soviet "layers".

In order to understand this point let us assume air space up to 15,000 feet "reserved" for Western Powers, (i.e. under exclusive air traffic control by Tempelhof ATC), and altitudes between 15,000 and 20,000 feet "reserved" for Soviets (i.e. under exclusive Soviet air traffic control), and 20,000 to 30,000 feet "reserved" for Western use. It should also be kept in mind that the Berlin Control Zone as Quadripartitely defined has a 10,000 foot ceiling (The control of airspace above this level defies useful analysis!). With this allocation of corridor air space in mind, let us assume a jet aircraft flight to Berlin leaving the airspace of the Federal Republic at an altitude of 25,000 feet. In order to land at a Berlin airport this aircraft must descend from the 20,000-30,000 foot western layer through the Soviet layer and into the lower western layer before it can enter the Berlin Control Zone. Under normal circumstances this descent would be made over a distance of 10 to 20 miles prior to reaching the outer limits of the Control Zone. Similarly, upon departure the aircraft would have to penetrate up through the reserved Soviet airspace in climbing to its 20,000-30,000 foot operating level.

With Western and Soviet operating levels under separate air traffic control centers, close coordination between those centers would be required to permit safe penetration and clearance for such

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penetration would be required from the Soviet air traffic control center before the aircraft passed through the Soviet layer. Such a situation would be even more serious than that now pertaining, since we would be admitting that a guarantee of flight safety from the Soviet would be required and we could claim no right to fly through their layer without one. Under such circumstances the high level reserved altitudes for Western flights would become a tunnel with only one entrance, i.e. at the Federal Republic border. On the other hand, the Soviets would be unaffected by any such layering since they need not observe corridor boundaries and hence would have unlimited access to their layer up to the Federal Republic boundaries.

If Department concurs with above analysis and conclusions, Embassy recommends Department seek tripartite agreement eliminate reserved altitudes as possible solution.

TIMBERLAKE

FA AUTH:ECON:HJTscca

Coordinated:POL:DKlein

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